



UNITED STATES SECTION
INTERNATIONAL BOUNDARY AND WATER COMMISSION
UNITED STATES AND MEXICO

United States Section SOP

Volume: II
Chapter: 0511
Date: November 03, 2005

Standard Operating Procedure - SOP

SUBJECT : Mail Management

TO : Communications and Records Employees, General Services Division

CONTROL : GSD, Communications and Records (915) 832-4744

511.1 PURPOSE:

To establish policies and procedures for the distribution of inter-office mail, incoming mail, outgoing mail and the handling of checks received through the mail at Headquarters, USIBWC.

511.2 AUTHORITY:

Code of Federal Regulations: 41 CFR 201-45.107; US Section Correspondence Manual; and U.S. Postal Service Domestic Mail Manual.

511.3 POLICY AND PROCEDURES

- a. *Inter-office mail deliveries:* Delivery and pick up of mail/distribution will be accomplished at the minimum of twice daily, once in the morning and once in the afternoon. When time permits, a third delivery and pick up will be accomplished

on or about 3:00 pm to process last minute outgoing mail. Delivery to the mailbox outside the building will be conducted at 3:30 pm.

b. Incoming mail: Incoming mail will be sorted out into letter-size envelopes, large envelopes, packages, magazines, newspapers, federal registers and miscellaneous items. Mail will be processed in order of importance. Process and forward immediately to the action officer all mail which has expedite or special postal service handling such as express mail, special delivery, insured or certified mail. All mail will be opened with the exception of the following offices:

1. Legal office including auditing, Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), and Ethics officer.
2. Foreign Affairs Officer (FAO) - only classified documents unopened.
3. Human Resources Office (HRO) - all properly identified documents.
4. Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) office - all documents.
5. Acquisitions office - only those documents pertaining to Invitation for Bids (IFB) and Request for Proposals (RFP) are delivered unopened.
6. Financial Services Division (FSD) - only those documents intended for "Payroll".
7. Mail addressed to the Chief security Officer.
8. Any other office or individual receiving "Personal in nature or confidential" documents.

NOTE: When practical to do so, the Communications and Records (C&R) receiving date stamp will be placed on the outside of each envelope on all of the above mail.

(1) In the event that a letter is opened by mistake, the document will be resealed and the office informed of this action.

(2) C&R personnel will not accept any identifiable private personal mail. The identifiable private personal mail will be returned to sender. It is recommended that IBWC employees have their personal mail delivered to their home address. Exceptions will be allowed for those newly arrived employees that do not have a permanent address or are living in temporary lodging.

(3) Place the C&R date stamp and make a "hold" copy of important correspondence including congressional mail, freedom of information act requests, letters addressed to the Commissioner and his staff that require action of some kind. The hold copy will be placed in the C&R suspense file until final action on the document is taken.

(4) Confidential or controlled mail will be date stamped on the outside of the envelope and taken to the USIBWC security officer or the person designated as the

agency document security officer. This type of mail is not to be opened or left unattended, and will be promptly delivered to the security officer, in person.

(5) Except for routine mail, a routing stamp will be placed on the back of the first page of the correspondence being processed.

(6) Mail addressed to the agency and not to individuals or departments will be processed last. The mail and file assistant will read each document and make a determination of the department/staff it should be routed to.

- c. *Congressional correspondence:* All Congressional Correspondence will be date stamped, a "hold" copy made, and the original placed in a special "Congressional" folder by personnel from the C&R office and delivered to the Office of the Commissioner. The statement on the folder establishes a three-day suspense for strict controls in answering such correspondence. The Commissioner's Executive Assistant or secretary will log in the correspondence, make a copy for the Commissioner and route the original to the appropriate official(s) for reply (see USIBWC correspondence manual ,Volume 2, Chapter 0503, for more information on congressional correspondence).
- d. *Check handling procedures:* Checks payable to the USIBWC will be delivered via mail or by person, to the C&R office. The C&R employees will make sure that checks payable to USIBWC - received through the mail and addressed to an USIBWC employee are intercepted prior to delivery. In the event that a check payable to USIBWC is not intercepted by C&R personnel and is delivered to an employee; the employee will promptly return the check to C&R for proper disposition. Checks are to be delivered to the appropriate designated FSD agent by personnel from the C&R office **only**. Checks received through the mail or by a person will immediately be transmitted and transported to FSD by C&R personnel. A transmittal letter is prepared by C&R to accompany the checks to FSD. This transmittal letter will contain pertinent information to properly identify the amount, purpose, and the sender of the receipts. The checks with the transmittal letter is delivered to FSD and given to a designated agent to sign for the receipts. A copy of the signed transmittal letter will be kept at the C&R office files for a period of five years.
- e. *Outgoing mail:* Outgoing mail will be checked to ensure that enclosures are attached, and that enclosures are also attached to the yellow file copy. If enclosures are too large, such as maps or drawings, write on the remarks section of the routing the location of the enclosures. Additionally, check to be sure that the routing is complete and that the yellow copy contains an original signature. Outgoing mail will be checked for obvious grammatical errors and if any are found, the letter will be returned to the originator for correction.

The weight limit for outgoing US Postal Service packages is four pounds. Any package weighting over four pounds will have to be mailed using UPS, FedEx ground or FedEx overnight. Street address is required for UPS and FedEx shipments. Also, a telephone number is required for the person or business receiving the shipment. All large shipments need to be at the supply office no later than 2:00 pm. Mail for US Postal mailing is taken outside the building at 3:30 pm to be picked up by the Postal Service at 3:45 pm. Any mail received by C&R after 3:30 pm will be mailed the following working day.

- f. *Mail Funding and Accounting Procedures:* Annual mail costs are obligated at the beginning of each the Fiscal Year (FY). The obligation is transmitted to the US Postal Service in form of a letter together with US Postal form 52. The Postal Service will bill the USIBWC in monthly payments through the Interagency Payment Collection (IPAC) system.

- (1) To load postage money into the meter, the postage meter will be connected to the fax telephone outlet (the meter won't work with a regular telephone outlet) to establish an electronic dialog with the US Postal Service central bank to add the required amount of postage money. This connection could be accomplished anytime during the year and load either the entire amount obligated or portion of the amount as needed. Postage meters will be used to pay for mailing of all US Postal Service costs, including postage due amounts on incoming mail. In the event that electricity is not available or the postage meter malfunctions, a supply of penalty mail official stamps will be kept on hand. Penalty mail stamps will be kept secured at all times.
- (2) At the end of each day, a reading from the postal meter will be recorded on the postage meter daily log. This reading will indicate the number of pieces of mail and the amount of money used for the day. At the end of each month the totals are entered on the mail file folder. Once a quarter, and before reloading the postage meter, the totals will be compared to the amount of money obligated to assure that the amount spent does not exceed the obligated amount. Daily postage logs or correspondence related to mail operation would be filed on 102-01a1, PAP 8, Mail Management file folder. This folder is kept at C&R for 10 years and retired to the National Records Center after the cut off date.

511.4 SUPERSESSION

This SOP supersedes the Communications and Records Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) Volume 2, Chapter 511, dated January 27, 2004.

511.5 EFFECTIVE DATE

The provisions of this SOP are effective upon the date of issuance.

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